

# S.T.A.N.D. Club



## Merrillville Community Schools are Making it Happen!



**WE ARE** S.T.A.N.D. (Socially Together and Naturally Diverse) is a diversity club at Merrillville High School, Clifford Pierce Middle School and Merrillville Intermediate School that focuses on promoting an appreciation for diversity through community service work. S.T.A.N.D. was brought to Merrillville in 1997 but originated in Rancho Cucamonga California at Rancho Cucamonga High School and was made available via the internet to any school system wanting to start a S.T.A.N.D. club in their district.

**OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES** Merrillville Schools are comprised of approximately 6687 students K-12 with one high school, one middle school, one intermediate school and 5 elementary schools. The demographic make-up of the school community reflects a population of 61% African American, 13.9% Caucasian, 18.5% Hispanic, and 5.9% Multi-Racial and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander. Approximately 61.6% of the students receive free and/or reduced lunch and the graduation rate for the last six years, except for 2015 (89.15%), has been above 90%.

### OUR PROMISING PRACTICE

The S.T.A.N.D. Club does numerous community service activities, including mentoring younger students, creating and performing original skits about diversity and providing opportunities for young people to come together in groups of 100 students at a time, (Impact Day) to address issues of intolerance and bullying, as well as hosting community events and workshops for teenagers in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. just to name a few. The S.T.A.N.D. Club challenges stereotypes and educates students, staff and community members about the importance of social justice and the value of appreciating diversity. Furthermore, the club impacts student achievement by having a significant and positive effect on school climate and culture. Through the numerous projects mentioned above, the club creates opportunities for students to be educated about differences, experience activities that challenge them to think more critically and most importantly, it empowers them to act in ways that contribute to making the school environment more enriching for all.

**OUR STEPS** The S.T.A.N.D. Club is open to any student who has a desire to want to make a difference in promoting an appreciation for diversity in our school community. Students may join at any time during the school year and can decide how active they would like to be based upon the number of projects that they decide to participate in.

**IN OUR OWN WORDS** *Merrillville Student* "STAND allows you to be yourself and have your own opinions. They're teaching us about what's happening in the world and telling us to love ourselves."

*Merrillville Parent*, "STAND is teaching children to come together as a group and to learn from one another, impacting their lives by learning how to be more caring, peaceful and understanding in this society. STAND is wonderful!"

*Merrillville Teacher* "I feel STAND has a big impact on our students. STAND students are motivated, caring and considerate of the people around them, and they have formed a community within our school that strives to truly include everyone. Through their activities they bring our students together in a manner that supports what goes on in the classroom."

For more information about our Merrillville schools S.T.A.N.D. club, email: Danny Lackey, Director of Diversity and Student Support Services at [dlackey@mvsc.k12.in.us](mailto:dlackey@mvsc.k12.in.us) or visit our website at <http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us>